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ABSTRACT

This paper examines multicultural postsecondary education and provides a framework through which equal learning outcomes can be delivered. The paper begins by clarifying what constitutes multicultural education, defines it, discusses common misconceptions, and examines how the goals of multicultural education have changed over the years. Next, the current goal of multicultural education (attaining equal learning outcomes) is discussed by examining the fundamental conditions upon which it is believed equitable instruction is built: excellence and equity; high expectations; and different instructional treatments. Then, the paper examines the framework for attaining equal learning outcomes by first discussing the areas of educational reform that are considered necessary at the university level in the areas of administrative leadership and resources, faculty involvement and support, and community responsiveness. Finally, an outline is provided of the framework itself which is comprised of faculty development, curriculum reform, program development and assessment, varied instructional methods, and the development of a supportive campus. It is suggested that these components need to be in place at university campuses in order to achieve equitable learning outcomes, but that each component must be developed and implemented by a campus in line with its contextual needs and interests. Contains 23 references. (GLR)

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MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION:

SOME CONSIDERATIONS FOR A UNIVERSITY SETTING

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MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION:

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INTRODUCTION

I would like to use this forum to offer some considerations for Multicultural Education at the university level. I will begin by attempting to bring some clarity to the term Multicultural Education. I will define it and discuss some of its critical features. Finally, I want to propose a framework through which equal learning outcomes can be delivered.

MISCONCEPTIONS

But before we get started, I'd like to dispell some mythology about Multicultural Education. There have been among educators at all levels, a great many misconceptions about what it is, about its purpose, and about its implications for students and for the institution. One of these is that it solely involves introducing those contributions made by people of color to a discipline or field of study. Another is that a campus becomes multicultural when the numbers of students and faculty of color are increased. While these types of misconceptions are limiting, the misconception that I find to be most pernicious is the one that implies that Multicultural Education is divisive because it gives attention to ethnic minorities and excludes non ethnic interests. But, Multicultural Education is not about exclusion. It is rather an attempt to bring into the educational mainstream those students who historically have been ignored.

DEFINITION

Having dispensed with some myths, let us now define Multicultural Education. The definition that I like best (and there are many from which to choose) is Suzuki's (1984)). He writes,

> Multicultural Education is a multidisciplinary educational program that provides multiple learning environments matching the academic, social, and linguistic needs of students. He goes on, in addition to enhancing the development of their academic skills, the program should help students develop a better understanding of their own backgrounds and of other groups that compose our society. . .

I find Susuki's definition appropriate for several reasons. It applies to all levels K through U. Its primary focus is on matching instructional approaches to the needs of the learner as a means of maximizing academic achievement. It promotes greater inter-ethnic understanding as an important objective, and it is a definition that is progressive enough to encompass the goals of Multicultural Education today.

GOALS

As with education in general, the goals of Multicultural Education have evolved over the years. It used to be as John Goodlad (1990) states, that:

> Education was thought of as process and system, effort and intention, investment and hope. But, today education is the result achieved, the learning that takes root when the process has been effective. . .

Similarly, the goals for Multicultural Education have changed over the past several decades. According to leading authors, (Sleeter, Grant & Gay, 1990) its purpose has shifted from attempting to instill cultural sensitivity, or making educators culturally aware, to providing access or educational oppor-

tunity to its present goal of equalizing learning outcomes and thus, providing equal benefits.

Let me expand for a moment on each of these shifts in goals. First of all, attempting to make educators sensitive to the influence of sociocultural factors on teaching failed because it didn't translate into significant attitudinal or behavioral changes. In a recent report on campus climate, CPEC (1990), found that while "some faculty are perceived by minority students as supportive, others seem to be quite patronizing, racist, sexist; and they inhibit the academic growth of ethnic students."

Multicultural Education's second shift towards the goal of access was marked by outreach efforts that attracted minority students to university campuses, and thus purported to offer them equal educational opportunity. We need only to look at the low retention and graduation rates across campuses nationally to see that as implemented, access had limited success for universities and deliterius effects on many of the ethnic minority students they attracted. In large measure, access failed as a goal because in this phase, universities neglected to develop sufficient instructional changes or support systems for minority students who came in with fewer skills and more personal and external burdens, (Munoz, 1986; Chacon, Cohen & Strouer, 1986; Alatore, 1991).

This brings us to the third shift in goals. Currently, the direction of Multicultural Education is in the establishment and extension of approaches that are specifically intended to produce equal learning outcomes for minority students (Sleeter, 1990). This goal holds great promise for ethnic minorities. For col-

leges and universities, the shift means developing programs that can assure all students the equal benefits of being highly and competitively prepared for post secondary study or for the profession or career of their choice.

SIGNIFICANT CONDITIONS

If the current goal, that of attaining equal learning outcomes is to be achieved, we must work from certain assumptions. In my mind, these are not only the markers of Multicultural Education in the 21st century, they are also the predicators for its success. These are fundamental conditions upon which equitable instruction is built. They are: (1) excellence and equity; (2) high expectations and (3) different instructional treatments.

(1) Excellence and Equity. Multicultural Education has always been about providing equity while it maintains excellence. The perception exists among some educators that one cannot have equity without lowering standards. But, there isn't one researcher or author in the field that proposes watering down the curriculum or minimizing levels of mastery in any discipline to achieve equity. On the contrary, if one examines some of the programs in which students of color have attained exceptional achievement, you see that rigor and high standards are their trademarks.

An example is the New Mexico Calculus Project offered at New Mexico State University at Las Cruces. The university's goal was to improve the teaching of calculus for all students including

the 30% who are Hispanic. The project was developed and is run by faculty members. One of their goals is to "build student's self confidence in theoretical thinking." They have done this by replacing standard problems and exams with research projects. Successful completion of these projects requires that students solve elaborate calculus problems, turn-in polished solutions, and present these to their professors in private 15 minute interviews. Out of 759 students in the program, 68% have either entered or have graduated from college, and between 67 and 75 percent are science or engineering majors (Gilman, 1990).

(2) High Expectations. The New Mexico State program is marked not only by its demand for academic excellence, but also by the expectation on the part of the faculty that all students can learn calculus. Instructional programs that serve students of color (and all students for that matter), can be effective only to the degree that they are based and implemented on the assumption that all students are capable of learning subject matter. But, espousing high expectations is not enough; expectations must be enacted.

I am always reminded when I speak on this topic of a somewhat painful experience that will illustrate this point. As a matter of practice, I supervise student teachers. One semester, I had a very promising student-teacher who had explained to me that she had the highest expectations for all of her high school history students; but in watching her teach, I began to notice a pattern. In her class, there were three African-American young women with whom she seldom interacted. What's more, she allowed

them to sit and talk while she discussed the lesson with the rest of the class. My question to her then and to other student teachers since then is always "How can you demonstrate your expectations for students if you don't interact with them?" How can you get to know them, motivate and challenge each of them to learn if you don't engage them?"

Research on the topic of teacher expectations has confirmed repeatedly that many teachers have fewer interactions with minority students (Brown, Ton & Cooper, 1985). We know also that at the university level, some professors may tend to engage ethnic-minority students differently and to a lesser degree than they do their non ethnic students (Allen, Bem & Niss, 1988). CPEC reported recently that "contact between the majority of faculty and ethnic students may be strained and irregular, especially outside of the classroom," and that generally, "faculty have very negative opinions about how well some minority students are prepared to undertake post secondary work."

(3) Diversified Instructional Treatments. Our notion of equality and perhaps the fear of appearing biased, prevent us at times from applying different instructional approaches with ethnic minority students. We may be hampered by our beliefs that to acknowledge ethnic difference is somehow discriminatory, or that providing equal educational opportunity means that we treat all students the same. But equal instructional treatment does not always guarantee equal educational opportunity. There is in fact in the Lau vs Nichols decision of 1974, legal precident for the use of different instructional treatments. In that case the U.S.

Supreme Court justices unanimously ruled that 1800 Chinese students in the San Francisco schools were indeed not receiving equal opportunity. Their ruling states: "There is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers and curriculum, for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education."

I mention this landmark decision, not because I'm proposing bilingual education as a remedy, but because it long ago established that it is unjust to teach students with different educational needs through the same instructional approaches.

There are a growing number of exemplary programs on campuses across the country that are applying different instructional approaches with enormous success. One example from our own backyard is the Professional Development Program (PDP) at Berkeley. As many of you know, it was developed by a mathematics professor, Uri Treisman, and initiated on the Berkeley campus in 1978. It began when Treisman decided to conduct an observational study to determine why it was that so many of the Black students who came in with high GPA's in math were failing prerequiste courses in science and math as freshman and sophomores. His data collection led him to conclude that part of the problem had to do with the way they were studying. He observed for example that Black students studied alone, even if for many long hours, while Asian students, who were passing, studied in groups. Through study groups Asian students tutored, criticized and supported each other. Treisman decided to replicate these study groups reasoning that they could offer Black students similar benefits.

His experiment resulted in a 65% graduation rate for PDP students versus a 39% graduation rate for non PDP students.

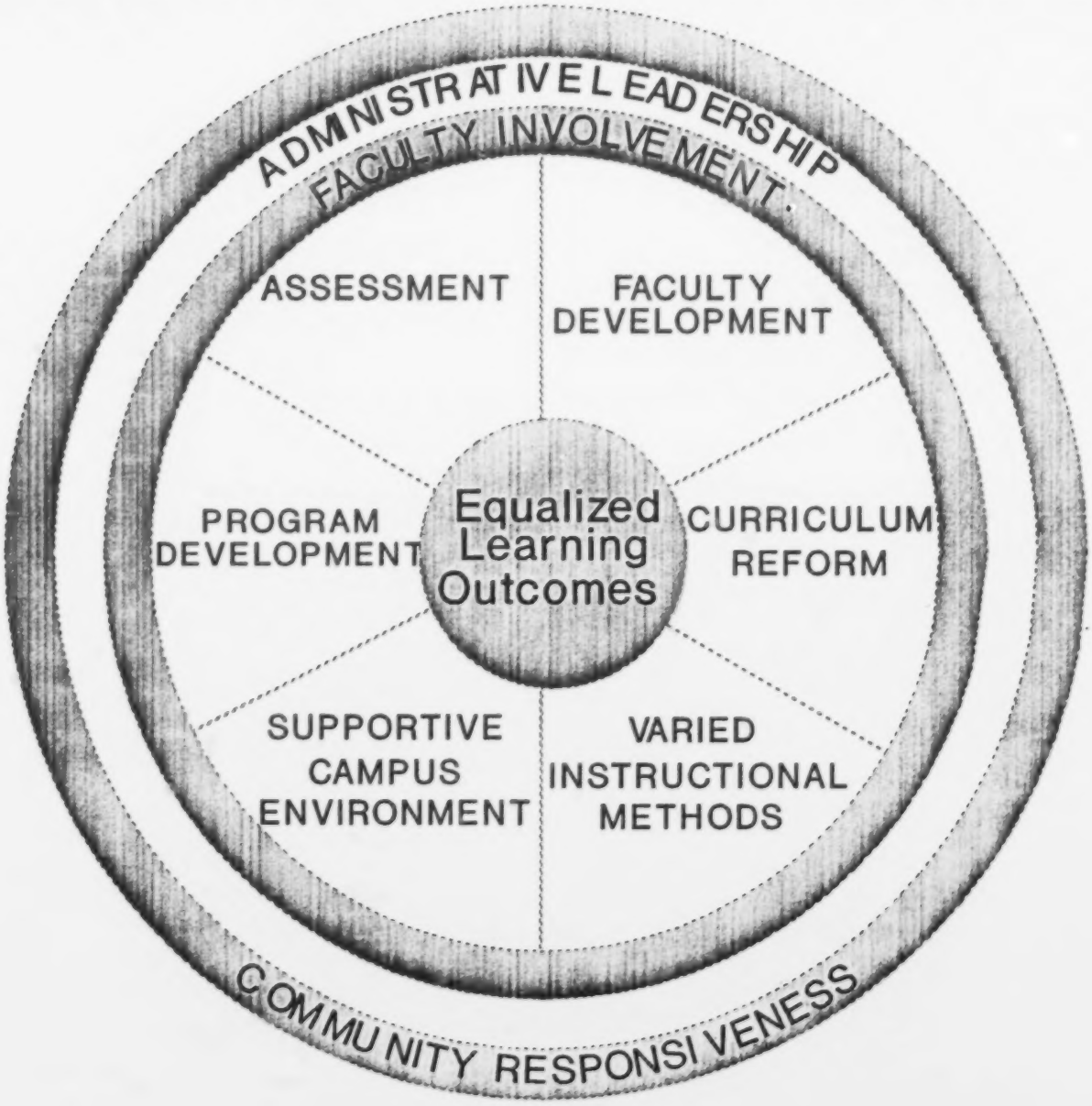
Now it's true that the program at Berkeley is elaborate and expensive, but the instructional methods that it incorporates are not. Using cooperative group instruction, encouraging students to study in groups and providing peer tutors are all well known teaching methods and are relatively simple to apply even by individual professors.

I would like to take a moment here to point out that in reviewing descriptions of programs that are yielding significant learning outcomes not only with minority students, but also with lower income students and with women, certain patterns emerge. First of all, as you would expect, effective programs apply varied instructional methods, rigorous standards for student performance, and high expectations for student achievement. Another feature that exemplary programs share in common is a marked student orientation versus an exclusive orientation toward imparting the subject matter. Clarence Stephens, founder of the outstanding Suny Potsdam Mathematics Program, describes the balance between teaching the student and teaching the content this way:

> We simply establish a humanistic academic environment for teaching mathematics courses in which students in mathematics feel good about themselves and find enjoyment in the study of mathematics as a result of proper teaching strategies and a supportive environment which supports student success and academic excellence (Gilmore, 1990). . .

The U.C. Berkeley, New Mexico State and Suny Potsdam programs are a small sample in a growing number of university ef-

A COMPREHENSIVE FRAMEWORK FOR MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION



forts that exemplify the types of results that are possible with ethnic minority students.

FRAMEWORK

Now that we have explored some of the assumptions and features of Multicultural Education requisite to equalizing learning outcomes, I would like to touch briefly upon some of the areas of reform that are necessary if a university is to move beyond the singular efforts of a few creative and committed colleagues. We need a comprehensive framework. This is not going to be easy because, to date, universities have been slow to develop comprehensive plans for Multicultural Education. Instead, the norm for universities is to lay claim to the successful initiatives developed by individual faculty and staff members as proof of institutional commitment. There is no question in my mind that university administrators and faculty are supportive of the types of programs that I have described, but after three decades of disparate attempts to implement Multicultural Education on university campuses, we need and are ready to attempt a comprehensive plan of action.

It is through a holistic and well developed framework that universities can be fully inclusive in attaining equal learning outcomes for all students. The framework that I would like to propose is built upon a foundation of administrative leadership, faculty involvement and community support. It is comprised of curriculum reform, varied instructional methods, a supportive campus environment, program development and assessment. These components are interdependent, and each is critical to the endeavor.

A. Administrative Leadership and Resources. It goes without saying that institutional change must have strong endorsement from the highest levels of the university; and it must be supported with some resources. The schools and departments must be given a mandate to develop a plan for Multicultural Education. Schools and departments then must take the leadership to revise the curriculum, design new programs and propose areas for faculty development.

B. Faculty Involvement and Support are fundamentally important because it is the faculty who must implement many of the initiatives called for to assure that all students attain equal learning outcomes. It is they who must rethink the curriculum, "multiculturalize" their own courses and vary their instructional methods. It is the faculty who must be willing to devote the time to mentor ethnic minority students or to develop partnerships with schools and community agencies. It is the faculty who must seek funding for instructional, training and research grants that extend our commitment to equity.

C. Community Responsiveness. The effective university does not work in a vacuum. It must be responsive to local, regional and national priorities. Any university located in California, one of the most diverse states in the country, must reflect that diversity in its curriculum. Developing a Multicultural Education plan will require collaboration with leaders, agencies and institutions within ethnic communities.

1. Faculty Development. The first component in the framework (moving clockwise) is faculty development. It may include intensive summer infusion workshops through which faculty learn from experts and colleagues how to incorporate multi-ethnic perspectives and varied instructional methods into their courses. Incentives and support for faculty development may include assigned time to reconceptionalize courses, to develop proposals for outside funding, and to conduct applied research.

2. Curriculum Reform to equalize learning outcomes on a university campus may be difficult, but it is not impossible. If, as Goodlad (1990) states, "the strength of teaching as a profession depends on understanding its moral imperatives" then surely we as faculty in academic programs can engage in revising our individual courses to ensure that all of our students will benefit equally.

In some cases, curricular reform may involve incorporating multi-ethnic perspectives across disciplines. But even in courses where attention to multi-ethnic perspectives may be less appropriate, faculty

can still work to diversify their instructional approaches by using peer tutors, cooperative group instruction and study groups to teach their courses.

3. Varied Instructional Methods. Diversifying instruction is important for a couple of reasons. First of all, using peer tutoring and group instruction allows us to better match our teaching styles to the learning styles of Latinos, African-Americans and women (Kagan, 1989). Secondly, cooperative groups when used effectively, have all of the qualities required to improve human relations. We know from research on desegregated schools (St. John, 1975), and more recent research on contact that when individuals of equal status work together over a prolonged period of time on a legitimate and sanctioned task, favorable interpersonal and group relations are promoted (Stephen & Rosenfield, 1989). Thus, using cooperative groups can assist us in attaining what Multicultural Education is about - better inter-ethnic relations.

4. Supportive Campus Environment. This area consists of student services that are well articulated with the academic side of the

university. It includes extensive faculty mentoring, early intervention efforts and peer counseling among other services. In short, it consists of all of those support efforts that assure ethnic minority students academic success, a voice in policy making forums and full participation in extra curricular activities.

5. Program Development. The function of this component is to the development of academic and support programs that enhance the goal of equalizing teaching outcomes. Program development may include revising, collasping, or extending existing programs. It must include seeking external funding to create new initiatives, and in some cases, to maintain those already in place.

6. Assessment. Consonant with the direction of education towards outcomes versus processes, universities across the nation are defining outcomes and designing assessment methods that are consistant with their goals, instructional objectives, institutional settings and their students. They are in effect, attempting to measure their ability to influence student learning outcomes. This is a

recursive and long term process of assessment and feedback through which the university's efforts at implementing components in the framework and the plan as a whole can be improved (Kameen & Justiz, 1988).

In summary, I'd like to say that together these six components and their three tiered foundation comprise the type of infrastructure that needs to be in place on university campuses. It is by no means all inclusive nor should it be. Each component must be developed and implemented by a campus in line with its contextual needs and interests. I present it here only as a point of departure for your consideration and refinement.

CONCLUSION

In closing, I would like to acknowledge that I deliberately have not enumerated the litany of compelling social, economic and demagraphic realities that demand the implementation of a comprehensive plan on university campuses. I believe that we are all fully cognizant of the critical need to equalize learning outcomes for the new majority. Instead, I will close by quoting Albert Shanker's hopeful and eloquent appeal to our collective good will as he states:

> In times of crises, individuals discover unsuspected strengths and reveal a capacity for bravery, endurance, generosity and loyalty beyond expectations... Sometimes

capabilities remain hidden simply because the circumstances of life do not evoke them...but sometimes, the gifts have been buried by early defeats and harsh treatment, or layered over by cynicism, or held inactive by self doubt... The battles we wage are not just exercises in compassion. They are battles for the release of human talent and energy. . .

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